



AUG. 19, 2009

HEALTH ADVISORY

Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Recommendations

The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) is recommending that health-care providers vaccinate against seasonal influenza as soon as vaccine is available.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), along with the NDDoH, recommends that health-care providers begin offering seasonal influenza vaccinations soon after vaccine becomes available, and if possible by October. To avoid missed opportunities for vaccination, providers should offer vaccination during routine health-care visits, or during hospitalizations whenever vaccine is available. Careful planning of seasonal influenza vaccination programs is needed due to the expected novel influenza A (H1N1) vaccine that will be available this fall which will place an even greater burden on vaccination programs and providers. Offering seasonal vaccine as soon as it is available, including in September or earlier, may reduce the overlap of seasonal and novel influenza vaccination efforts. Studies have shown that immunity to influenza vaccine, even in the elderly, lasts for at least one year. There is no concern about waning immunity when giving influenza vaccine prior to October.

Vaccination efforts should continue throughout the season because the duration of the influenza season varies, and influenza might not appear in certain communities until February or March. Providers should offer influenza vaccine routinely, and organized vaccination campaigns should continue throughout the influenza season, even after influenza activity has begun in the community. Vaccine administered in December or later, even if influenza activity has already begun, is likely to be beneficial in the majority of influenza seasons.

All children ages 6 months through 8 years who have not received vaccination against influenza previously should receive their first dose as soon after vaccine becomes available as is feasible and should receive the second dose at least four weeks later. This practice increases the opportunity for both doses to be administered before or shortly after the onset of influenza activity.

The following people are recommended to be vaccinated each year against influenza:

- All children ages 6 months through 18 years
- All people ages 50 and older
- Women who will be pregnant during the influenza season
- Adults and children who have chronic pulmonary (including asthma) or cardiovascular (except hypertension), renal, hepatic, neurological/neuromuscular, hematologic, or metabolic disorders (including diabetes mellitus)

- Adults and children who have immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by HIV)
- Residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- Health-care personnel
- Household contacts and caregivers of children younger than 6 months
- Household contacts and caregivers of people at high risk for complications due to influenza
- Anyone who wants to protect themselves from influenza

For more information about seasonal influenza vaccination see the ACIP recommendations at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5808a1.htm?s_cid=rr5808a1_e.

Information also is available at www.ndflu.com.

Further information will be distributed through the Health Alert Network (HAN) as needed and will be posted at www.ndhan.gov. Please contact the North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Disease Control, at 701.328.2378 or 800.472.2180 with any questions regarding this issue.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

- *Health Alert conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.*
- *Health Advisory provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.*
- *Health Update provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.*
- *Health Information provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.*

This message is being sent to local public health units, clinics, hospitals, physicians, tribal health, North Dakota Nurses Association, North Dakota Long Term Care Association, North Dakota Healthcare Association, North Dakota Medical Association, North Dakota EMS Association and hospital public information officers.